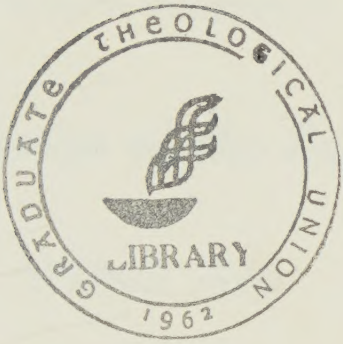
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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES."
—RIG VEDA

VEDANTA QUARTERLY

Message of the East

SPRING 1960

THE LIFE WITHIN

Single Copies 75c $3.00 A Year

VOLUME XLVIV NUMBER 1

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VEDANTA QUARTERLY

MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East."
—*Ezekiel*

"Light shall come again from the East."
—*Tyndall*

VOLUME XLVIV 1960 NUMBER 1

THE NAMELESS

by Walt Whitman

O Thou transcendant!
Nameless — the fibre and the breath!
Light of the light — shedding forth universes — thou center of them!
Thou mightier center of the true, the good, the loving!
Thou moral, spiritual fountain! affection's source! thou reservoir!
(O pensive soul of me! O thirst unsatisfied! waitest not there?
Waitest not haply for us, somewhere there, the Comrade perfect?)
Thou pulse! thou motive of the stars, suns, systems
That, circling, move in order, safe, harmonious,
Athwart the shapeless vastness of space!
How should I think — how breathe a single breath — how speak — if, out of myself,
I could not launch to those superior universes?
Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,
At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death,
But that I, turning, call to thee, O soul, thou actual Me,

And lo! thou gently masterest the orbs,
Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death,
And fillest, swellest full, the vastnesses of Space.

KINSHIP OF IDEALS

Do you know how God dwells in man? He dwells in the same way as ladies of wealthy families do behind a latticed screen. They can see everybody, but no one can see them. God abides in all in an exactly similar way. —*Sri Ramakrishna*

Of old people knew not My name. Therefore I I was born into the visible world, and endured a base existence.

In heaven I am the deity of the sun. In the celestial region I am the goddess of music. I hide in the great earth, and produce all things.

—*Oracle of the Deity Itsukushima in Aki*

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:

Neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

—*New Testament*

The Buddhas in innumerable Buddha-lands
Are but the cosmic Buddha in our hearts:
The golden lotuses countless as the drops
In the ocean are our own corporeal frame.
Each work of art the cosmic life reveals,
Each mystic syllable a myriad formulae.

—*Kukai*

Seeing the world, the Jnani sees the Self which is the Substratum of all that is seen.

—*Ramana Maharshi*

THE LIFE WITHIN

by Swami Paramananda

There are moments in our life when we are capable of feeling more, seeing more, perceiving more, and these moments are not accidental. They are ordained, and they are in absolute accordance with our own power of inner perception. Sometimes we attribute them to our surroundings, but always it is we ourselves who bring them about. It is our own inner life which determines everything we experience and that is what helps. There may be periods of exuberance, such as we find sometimes in youth, but these do not sustain us. Therefore it is in the province of spiritual life where we find the rhythmic balance and become firmly convinced that we are not to place faith in the passing and perishable things but only on that which is abiding. For it is only in this way that we gain power to cope with the world and the transitory conditions which at times come upon us with such vehemence.

"God is not external to anyone, but is present with all things, though they are ignorant that He is so." Thus Plotinus expressed his idea of the Divine. He "is not external to anyone." Sometimes we think it does not make any difference what kind of inner life we live, the kind of thoughts we think and that by merely going to church or performing some form of ritual we gain sufficient spiritual protection. But these are all empty if our life is not rhythmic, our thoughts and perception orderly and harmonious.

There is no one who wants to be without the supreme support; and actually no one is without religion in its vital sense. But unfortunately man has distorted notions. He sometimes looks too much without. There are plenty of people who never pay heed to the essential. The true Christ means nothing to them; instead, he is a sort of spiritual convenience, someone to whom a certain amount of attention should be paid, and for that reason alone they accept religion. But how quickly such feelings vanish in thin air! And how can man ever find anything to sustain him if he has no inner life? I have never known a person to be really happy and continue to be happy unless he had found something fundamental within. The physical cannot uphold him. If you have any doubt about this prove it to yourself; you will have many occasions to do so, that is if you do not go through life half asleep. If you keep your eyes wide open you will discover that this material existence by itself gives us nothing. In fact, we are impoverished when we turn away from our inner resources.

It is important for everyone to have an inner life. Without it we rise and fall like the temperature. Someone smiles on us and we feel tremendously elated; then someone frowns on us and immediately we are cut down. From the Rig Veda there comes a beautiful utterance: "Where life is free, in the third heaven of heavens, where the worlds are radiant, there make me immortal! Where the place of the bright sun is, where there is freedom and delight, there make me immortal!"

This may mean something to you and it may not, although I cannot see how it can fail to touch a chord in your heart. "Where life is free," that is, where there are no obstacles, no jealousy, no hatred, no ignoble thoughts and where human beings are not constantly in fever of anguish. "Where the place of the bright sun is." The mystics and spiritually awakened ones say there is a realm where the sun never fades. It may be a figure of speech, or a mystical fancy, but let us understand the significance. It means there is no darkness.

People who are constantly dependent on artificial conditions grow frightened if something goes wrong. Suppose that suddenly where there is a crowd lights are put out; at once there is a panic. Often in theaters in an emergency spectators stumble over one another in order to get out, causing serious accidents. And what does this indicate? It expressess a feverish, excitable, uncontrolled human nature with too much concentration on the outside.

We should not wait until something happens. Instead we must always be prepared, prepared with courage to face the destruction of all our material assets. "Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free." Christ told us this. What is this Truth? Only when it is related to our own life does it give us safety and security. Truth is not found in the outside world or the outer church. If we have not touched it within ourselves we will find it nowhere. If our inner life is empty our very breath will emanate a sense of depression.

There can be no happiness for the individual, no happiness for the world, until we find the source of this happiness. Our possessions, and equipment, our hands and feet, our brain and heart and all our creative faculties will help us greatly if we will relate them to the inner source; otherwise they will bring only emptiness.

The whole world is full of God, full of truth, full of beauty. The trouble with many people is that they think they can play a little make-believe game in regard to God and spirituality. But it is the inner life by means of which we learn to remain calm under all circumstances — in happiness and misery, success and failure, victory and defeat, in good fortune and ill. When somebody else is stricken by poverty, we do not feel it in the same way as we feel our own misfortune; in fact we may even congratulate ourself that we are clever and therefore safe and secure. We look upon it all as a witness. Perhaps some day instead of being miserable and filling the whole atmosphere with gloom, we will learn to look upon our own adversity in the same light as we do that of another.

We often feel incapable of coping with all the evils in the world today, and we wonder how to bring up our children so that they may have better advantages. There is only one way to elevate the minds of youth and that is by giving them something of constructive value. We need not call it religion; spirituality is just as good a name. The thing is everyone must find something higher and it must be found within himself. We cannot impose

upon anyone greatness, nobility, unselfishness, heroism or any of the finer qualities of life. These fundamental traits that we need in order to build finer character, happier individuals and better humanity must be found deep within our own soul. It is not what we say, so much as what we think, what we are in our private life and that which we express when we are taken unawares that has its effect. You may say, "I will not lose my temper when the children are around; I will not use any bad language when they are near enough to hear." But to refrain from these things just under certain circumstances, to appear in a favorable light at times and then fall back to bad habits is not enough. We are sure to forget ourselves time after time. We must be the thing we pretend to be, for it is only in this way that we convey these greater qualities to others. Whenever children are under the influence of any adverse emotion or ignoble instinct, merely rebuking them will not help; rather show them that there is a Power within themselves. Tell them to cultivate manliness, that it is far more honorable to be contained and calm than to burst forth in anger. One who yields to temper or to any evil emotion is a weakling; there is no question about it. We always admire a person who has dignity. There are certain traits in human nature that are outstanding no matter where we find them. We may not always understand the outer life of a person, but we do understand his spiritual life because it is always expressed through the qualities of his mind, his intellect and his soul force.

Here is a statement which will interest you. It is from a man of science. "The deeper we go in science, the more certain it becomes that all the realities of nature are in the regions of the invisible." I think this is an accurate observation. Our quarrel is with the temporal. Our disturbance, unrest, unhappiness, all are due to entanglements with the transitory. As soon as we turn our face to the eternal Principle which is unseen, our problems melt away. Man too often refuses to see this; he makes excuses: "I do not know anything about God or Truth," he tells us; "what is the use of wasting my time?" That is not logical. Man cannot give that excuse and escape the results of it. What a tremendous amount of effort he makes for other things, and often for the sake of gold or some other mineral, he expends a fortune and even risks his life. But when it comes to the divine Principle, because it happens to be unseen, hidden within, he is full of inertia.

Life itself should inspire us. It is sufficient proof that there is a power behind and in each one. The real essence is within us. We often, so to speak, go begging from door to door asking for a little grace, hoping that we may find happiness, when all the time it is within ourselves. We are reminded of the parable of the man who came home one cold wintry night and found that the fire in his fireplace had gone out. So he took his dimly lighted lantern and went from house to house begging for a flame so that he could light his fire with it. Finally one man said, "My foolish friend, you have the means in your hand; go home and light the

fire with your lamp." Do you see the significance of it? We have within ourselves a light containing infinite possibilities. At the present moment it may appear blurred; or we may have forgotten that it is there and believe that we are incapable of thinking lofty thoughts. When we compare ourselves with a man of genius, we feel we are nothing; we almost die with shame or perhaps may even become envious that such and such a person should have so much and we so little. But that does not get us anywhere. It is only as we redirect our gaze to That within ourselves that we are able to face life with new courage. How beautiful is a rose or some other flower blooming in its full glory, and how it inspires us! Same way it is with human life when under proper care and protection it blossoms forth. At first we may think that we are nothing, or that we are impoverished. Sometimes through self-pity we experience all sorts of self-imposed struggles. But these are alien to our true being and therefore we do not flourish under such conditions.

Let us make our spiritual life practical. You and I are not expected to do something contrary to our nature, or strain our capacity. There is Something within us that will direct our steps and guide us toward our goal. We must not depend too much on the externals of life. We like to boast that we are intelligent and civilized; let us prove that it is so by our God-given qualities. Our superiority does not lie in the clothes we wear nor in the cities we build, not even in the inventions that we are able to make, for what is their real worth unless they

are used properly? Today we have the facilities to send a message swiftly around the world. This is a marvelous gift, but its value depends on the kind of message we transmit and not on the speed with which it is sent or on the intricacy of the instrument.

Every one of us should think constructive thoughts and create a living atmosphere of harmony and peace. In this way we can change the whole world, for the world is what we make it. Christ was able to prove this. Just think of all the obstacles he had on his path. What are our difficulties? Let us put them side by side with those that Christ had to face or St. Francis or Lord Buddha. All saints, all real scientists, all great men have had to meet constant opposition. So we should not feel depressed at any time, or take too seriously what we see on the outside. Then we will minimize our fears, our ailments and worries. Fear is the worst of all diseases. It is the cause of all sickness. It takes possession of our mind through doubt, despondency, envy, jealousy and the like. These are poisonous seeds that bear fruit unless we can check them in time or eliminate them. Therefore we have a great task to accomplish if we are interested in the higher life and living so that we may have happiness.

Let us find time to commune with our inner Source. "Man shall not live by bread alone." You know these familiar words, and how true they are! The fulfillment in life comes only when we find our inner resource, when we no longer want to grasp things for ourselves, when we do not seek

our personal happiness. We come to glory only as we live in harmony with the Ideal and as we know that indwelling One who is within every one of us. It is through this knowledge that we overcome the fictitious obstacles and problems that make for unrest and unhappiness.

We admire those who are tranquil, poised and self-contained. It is the inward life which gives man this quality, and we can acquire it only in one way: that is being true to ourselves in our inner life. Therefore instead of listening to the voices of the world, instead of believing and trusting the things which are transitory and fleeting, let us turn always to that One who knows, who watches over us in times of difficulty. Many have religion and faith until something goes wrong; then their faith ceases to operate. But that is the occasion to prove it. If we believe that there is a beneficent hand guiding our destiny, if we know God is all-good, all-loving, we do not question merely because something has gone wrong. Fine stones are trimmed to make them more beautiful, so also the hard experiences in life can make us more beautiful if we are not frightened by them. Under stress our inner strength can grow stronger. So always think of this and turn within. Whenever you have an emergency, or a major difficulty, before you go to anyone for help, go to your own Self, go within; for there lies your unfailing strength, the real solution for your troubles and the fulfillment of all your needs.

In your patience, possess ye your souls.

—*St. Luke*

WISDOM OF TURIYANANDA

Surrender yourself to God. You call Him omnipotent and omniscient. Why then should you hesitate to take refuge in Him? Surrender yourself sincerely. Don't rely upon your own strength. There is no deceiving God. He knows everything.

If you can feel restless for God, know that He is very near. Then you don't have to wait long for His vision.

. . . if you move one step toward God, He will take ten steps toward you.

Supreme patience is essential. If only one can continue patiently, after some time everything comes to be favorable. It is because men cannot hold to patience that they fail to achieve anything. Else there is no other reason for their failure. Success is inevitable for one who persists with patience.

Let the body reap the fruit of its actions, for they cannot be escaped under any circumstances; but the mind should not forget God in the midst of these troubles. There is no gain in discontented grumbling and murmurings. By that none can evade the inevitable sufferings, but on the other hand it (grumbling) does a lot of positive harm by making us oblivious to the ultimate ideal of our life.

The control of the passions is a necessary practice of austerity, but genuine control does not come until one has knowledge of God. When one has attained union with Him, the mind no longer runs after flesh; the craving has completely disappeared.

Never take pride in the thought that you have controlled your passions. If you do, they will become active again.

There are evil tendencies in the mind, but we have to rise above them. We must keep our minds fixed in God. Struggle, struggle! Realize something! See Him. Attain Him! Then do as you please.

You have to transcend both good and evil. However pure the mind becomes, you are not safe until you have transcended the mind itself. The sword must touch the touchstone before it turns to gold. Know your true nature is beyond both good and evil.

The Lord is not partial. His grace falls equally upon saint and sinner just as rain falls equally on all the land. But only the ground which is cultivated reaps a good harvest. If you ask why some feel His grace and others do not, the only answer is ignorance.

That which is good and pure in you is God. That which is evil in you is your ego. The more you think of Him, the more He will increase and you will decrease.

The highest conception is to think that everything is He. Failing that, it is best to think that He is the real agent behind all actions and He is causing us to act.

God and man — there is a separation. Let your tears wipe out that separation . . . everybody can take refuge in God and attain supreme illumination.

WHAT IS PRAYER?

*by Evelyn Underhill**

For what, after all, is prayer? It is a mutual act, a communion of the created spirit with Uncreated Spirit: of the human self, immersed in contingency and succession, with the all-penetrating God who yet transcends contingency and succession—in whom, as St. Augustine said, "are all moments of time." It is therefore the religious act *per excellence*; and rightly understood, should give us a clue to all that religion means in the life of man. "We know in general," says Grou, "that prayer is a religious act; but when it comes to praying, we easily lose sight of the fact that it is a supernatural act, which is consequently beyond our power, and which we cannot properly perform without the inspiration and help of grace." The initiative, then, in all genuine prayer, is not human but Divine. . . .

Genuine prayer in all its degrees, from the most naive to the most transcendental, opens up human personality to the all-penetrating Divine activity. Progress in prayer, whatever its apparent form, consists in the development of this its essential character. It places our souls at the disposal of immanent Spirit. In other words, it promotes abandonment to God; and this in order that the soul's separate activity may more and more be invaded, transfigured, and at last superseded by the unmeasured Divine action. In Pauline language, maturity of soul is to be gauged by the extent in which the Spirit "prays in us."

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DIVINE SIGHT

by Srimati Gayatri Devi

In all the scriptures of the world, of the East and of the West, there is reference to man's having *seen* God, to the prophets and the sages who gained vision of That which we regard as supernatural. Few there are among the Christians or Jews who doubt that Moses saw God in the burning-bush. And it is interesting to discover that in the Orient the earliest philosophers, the rishis, were known as *drashta* — "seer". No one is entitled to such a rank unless he has somehow testified that he has seen. What they had seen, and by what particular method or technique, on these there may be differences of opinion. However, the fact remains, man himself possesses powers which are extrasensory, supersensual. In our time, which is considered very scientific, all kinds of experiments are being made to give man actual proof that there are phenomena beyond the range of his sense perception, and that these can be perceived and comprehended. It is evident that man is not content with inventing instruments which give him greater power of perception. He wants something more.

Let us stop for a moment and think how marvelous are today's apparatus for perception: the telescope with its very large lens, the microscope that reveals the most minute particles; and there are still finer instruments, the names of which we probably do not know, by which the scientist detects the atoms and the electrons, and even the finest particles. Man himself has invented these

instruments, and for what purpose? To gain further sight. He would penetrate deeper and deeper into everything that exists in order to know what it actually is and how he may use it. All this is to bring within his range of vision more and more of that which is in the realm of nature, to see that which lies hidden in the interior.

However, all these instruments of examination still do not give man access into subtle realities. It is all a matter of what one wants to see. Existence is not only multiple in its manifestation, but it is extremely mysterious. It consists of the gross, the more gross, the subtle and the most subtle. What I am trying to say, Shakespeare has put thus, "There are many things in heaven and earth, Horatio, that are not dreamt of in your philosophy." Much there is in the most minute form and in the vast in manifestation which we do not know. This we must take into account before we can discuss deeply or comprehensively the subject of divine sight. We see so very little with our mortal eyes. We see a little more with our invented instruments and mechanisms. Much, however, remains unseen.

There is another point also that we ought to consider: Whether at this stage of our perception we see much or little, we all possess within ourselves an increasing capacity to gain this sight.

Some people have what we call the psychic gift in the same way as one can be gifted in music. It is a talent which can be developed just as the gift of singing, writing, painting, composing, or any other creative ability. As human beings we

possess many talents some of which are very fine indeed. So the psychic sight is the talent, the capacity to witness what is ordinarily hidden and thus known as the mysterious or the occult. This ability, like any other, is something which can be developed, and we have to admit that there are those who quite naturally have it.

We must proceed then from the assumption — if not the result of our own knowledge then that of someone whose experience we accept — that there are phenomena about which we know very little or nothing. It is foolish to deny fact simply because we happen to be ignorant of it. Those who are gifted with a special sight make claims because they have had glimpses of that which we have not beheld. Man does see, therefore he can make claims. Some people declare that they see fairies, others devas, others again angels. And we either question the assertion or, believing, rack our brains in an attempt to prove the existence of such beings.

In the broadest sense, everything exists. What does not manifest as phenomena can have actual being as the materialization of imagination. Do we not constantly give form to that which is quite subtle and only an idea in our mind? What is a picture on canvas? What is a building? There is an artist behind the picture, an architect behind the building, and each of these forms has been outlined first in the mind and imagination of a man. Through prejudice and preconceived notions we can so easily bar ourselves from an inclusive and understanding view of all things.

Yes, there are things in heaven and earth that can be brought within the world of our perception. Man *can* see. But would the man who does see these things be considered as one who is endowed with divine sight?

Everyone knows what mortal sight is. We also know what its absence means, what a deprivation it is to one to be without this legitimate right. In other words, we value our mortal sight. But is mortal sight the same as psychic sight? Is it the same as that which is known as the divine sight? We live in a world of distinctions and differentiations, and it would be foolish on my part, as a person who practices discrimination, not to draw the line and say: "No, mortal sight is not the same as psychic sight, nor is psychic sight the same as divine sight!" Mortal sight we share in common with all creatures who are endowed with these sense organs, the eyes. Psychic sight we may share with a number of human beings just as we may share the talent for writing or speaking with some people. But divine sight! That we share only with very few persons who have come to a range of perception which is still removed from most of us.

Every single great personality of our world — great in the sense that they have cultivated their God-given spirituality — every one of them is endowed with this divine sight. We spoke of Moses. Let us think now of Jesus. From everything he said and conveyed, we cannot escape the fact that he knew much more than all his contemporaries; he saw a great deal more than all the

people who moved beside him. This is the wonder of his personality. When he expressed himself, it was not that he was aiming at being different, with an improved point of view; his very personality revealed something most unusual. The wonder of it! What does this man know? How can he use this kind of language? How he speaks of heaven, of the kingdom of God, of things so very rare! And when he spoke, he gave the impression that he knew for certain what he was speaking about. Can anyone be so convincing unless his words are sustained by experience? Without any question, we must say here was someone who had divine sight. He must have seen God, or he could not have said with such power to convince: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." And here was the condition that had to be fulfilled if they wanted to see.

To our curious minds, to our probing, questioning intelligence comes this: Just what is divine sight? What does a person see when he has this sight?

India's is a culture in which one finds men and women constantly and easily mingling the natural with the supernatural. This is an aspect of Indian life that still has not been quite fathomed by the West. We do not talk of our gods and goddesses as the Greeks do, conceiving of them as history, commemorated by statues which decorate museums. No, we talk about our gods and goddesses with a naturalness as if they actually exist. If you have difficulty convincing your children of the existence of Santa Claus, go to

an Indian child, or, for that matter, an adult. He will say, "Certainly he exists! He will materialize for you." This is the type of mind we Orientals have; this is the kind of faith we possess. So it is nothing for us to think and speak of the devas and devis of our pantheon, the characters of our epics, the personalities of our history which are separated from us only by time. We regard them as if here and now they would come into being.

Sri Ramakrishna, that great modern saint, was somebody who was the product of this extraordinary culture and who possessed divine sight. Yet he gained this sight purely by the practice of that which Jesus recommends. He was the pure in heart — the purest of the pure — for he did not want anything else in life but God. This is the condition of purity which makes the foundation for every kind of sight. Because he had fulfilled this prerequisite, the natural, the supernatural, the extrasensory, the supersensual, and all that which is within the scope of our own perception, all was blended into one harmony in him. He saw constantly. I am sure, had he been introduced to the West in his time, there would have been no appreciation of his experiences. In fact they would have been compared with the findings of today's psychologists and psychiatrists. Institutions are filled with people who will tell you they see many things, every conceivable kind of terrifying creature.

Please do not categorize Sri Ramakrishna with such. He was not deranged. That which he saw had nothing to do with any kind of imbalance. It

was the exact opposite. He had so refined his instrument that it had become highly sensitive. It was like the telescope and microscope and radar; it could detect, reflect and magnify anything. He could perceive with his physical eyes that which is not within the power of earthly sight. In the same way he responded with his own mortal frame to the agony of other people. Let me tell you, in this connection, how once he shuddered and cried out when he saw two men fighting and giving blows to each other in the distance, because he felt the blows upon his own flesh. This is the type of sensitivity Sri Ramakrishna possessed. In every plane of existence, physical and spiritual, he was able to see. He was eternally in love with God. He was the child, and God his Divine Mother and how he begged for the vision of Her! Naturally, he was the product of his own country's tradition which has envisioned God in this particular form. How would he see God if not in that image?

This is one question that I am often moved to ask people. If one is accustomed to thinking of God, or the Son of God, in the form of Jesus, would he see Buddha or Krishna or a light? Why would you not see God as exactly that which is the picture in your own mind? India explains this continually — that the omnipotent Being, that undivided Principle, the supreme Intelligence whom we call God can be anything or do anything and can manifest Himself in any manner in order to fulfill the need, the hunger and the yearning of those who seek Him.

Sri Ramakrishna, having sought and worshipped God as Mother, beheld Her as Mother. He tells how he actually saw Her, and he says, "I felt her breath upon my flesh." So this is real, not imaginary. Nor would we consider this kind of experience as psychic, in the sense in which that word is ordinarily used.

Of course, many people claim to have many kinds of visions; they see white elephants, winged horses, golden beings and shining creatures; however, such sights are not testimony of any spirituality. We must make distinction: Not everybody who is gifted with extrasensory perception is necessarily spiritual. Divine sight belongs to spiritual people, and it comes to one through purity of the heart. It can also be so cultivated that it will destroy all impurity in us. What I am trying to say is that we may begin by not being the purest of human entities. Do not misunderstand. We are not talking about sin. According to Indian teaching sin is only man's misguided action, a blunder with which he should not be labeled for the rest of his existence — neither in this life nor hereafter. It is something he will work out. Just as he is capable of great purity, he is also capable of impurity. And it is something that has to be removed from him if he is to ascend to that realm of existence where there is no longer any barrier for him. He and the universe stand together; he has access into it — the universe in the largest sense. It is not the universe of the astronomers. I speak of that Cosmic Existence.

There comes a time in man's life when he is able

to see everything; he becomes endowed with divine sight. You ask why? And how? Because he has known the first principle; he has recognized the source of existence; he has come upon the Cause. We should realize that everything has a cause. You and I have proceeded from the first Cause otherwise we would not be here. What will remain if humanity is wiped out? Now do not become frightened. Be daring in your thinking. Even if the whole of existence were demolished, would anything remain? You can destroy nothing, because everything that is, is inherent in That which is eternal. The form, the shape, the texture can change; the attributes can be altered, but you cannot annihilate existence.

This is what we have to realize. When we recognize the Existence Absolute, the source and origin of all things, we begin to be endowed with divine sight. From this point, everyone starts. Some may be born with God-awareness to a degree; others become more aware of Truth as they live. If we want to gain that sight which would penetrate through every darkness, every veil, every barrier, then we must begin with the understanding of That which is at the back of everything that is. As we bring ourselves close to this Reality, we shall find that we are beginning to see. This does not mean that you will, like Sri Ramakrishna, see gods and goddesses or historic figures materializing before your eyes. But you will be seeing God.

Sri Ramakrishna speaks of this divine sight in these words: "I have come to a stage of realization in which I see that God is walking in every human

form and manifesting Himself alike through the sage and the sinner, the virtuous and the vicious."

The mystic, Don Anscar Vonier says: "The vision of God, as the term implies, is the seeing of God not with bodily eyes of course, but with the mind. The main idea conveyed by the term 'vision' is this: It is God as He is in Himself, Who is seen in the mind; it is not a mere image of Him, a mere idea of Him however clear; it is Himself. It is a direct, uninterrupted gazing on God's beauty."

The mystics and the seers convey their experience to us through the medium of language and whenever an idea is framed in language immediately it becomes limited. Anscar Vonier speaks of the beauty of God — seeing Him as beauty. You may say, "I have no difficulty perceiving beauty, nor in recognizing that this beauty is the reflection of God or the image of God. Does this imply that I have divine sight?" I would answer, "Only partially. You are just beginning to have divine sight." When one has seen the image of beauty, is in a state of communion and really feels related, united, absorbed in God-awareness, at such a moment he can have a wonderful experience which is entirely his own. Then he may claim to have gained divine vision. However, what he must do is to enlarge it so that not only in the interior of his own being, in the moments of communion, will he know and touch and perceive Reality, but he must extend the experience beyond himself. This is what happens to mortals who gain immortal sight.

This is the difference between a Ramakrishna

or a Christ and ourselves. We cannot see what they saw. Take notice of Sri Ramakrishna's statement: "I see God in the sage and the sinner." You see, there is something beyond morality, something beyond our limited understanding of truth. Those who have discovered the truth within themselves see beyond all limitation.

I used to say to Swami Paramananda, "How can you be so blind? Don't you know this person is hypocritical; he is flattering you, putting on this show of sincerity?" I spoke so to my teacher in my ignorance, and he would only smile. He was not looking at that person's temporary insincerity or hypocrisy. He knew the possibility. He saw what that person was and what he could become if someone placed faith in him.

When Jesus saw God in the sinner, did the prostitution of the woman or the imperfections of her action glare in his face? No. He saw that which the person was, intrinsically, deep within herself — that segment of divinity that was hers. This is what comes with divine sight, and some of us have experienced it in a small way.

If you have the divine sight, you can help others. If you see in the individual what he is basically and maintain your faith in that, he will someday become that. This is the reason the disciples of Christ became saints. They were very imperfect human beings, but the faith of their master became a tremendous incentive in their lives. Only those who have the divine sight can place such transforming faith in men.

When an illumined soul speaks of going beyond

good and evil, he means that good and evil have become the same to him. Seeing that which is beyond them, he does not make any distinction. For him the two are only temporary manifestations. If you and I are to gain such vision, even partially, we must practice the most simple teaching of the simple one, Christ. Was he not a simple one? He certainly was. With all our elaborate intellect, we try to make of him something complex, but he will remain a very simple person with a very simple teaching. Shall we practice that teaching? Let us have the purity of heart which comes from beginning at the point of seeing God. And before we know it, all in us will be pure, and we will have become the reflectors of truth.

Let us realize that we are capable of that vision of beauty, of truth, of reality and we can cultivate it. When we can translate into our everyday life something of what we gain in our moments of spiritual experience, we shall gradually change our ordinary perception into true vision.

It is by losing the egocentric life that we save the hitherto latent and undiscovered life which, in the spiritual part of our being, we share with the divine Ground. This new-found life is "more abundant" than the other, and of a different and higher kind. Its possession is liberation into the eternal, and liberation is beatitude. Necessarily so; for the Brahman, who is one with the Atman, is not only Being and Knowledge, but also Bliss, and, after Love and Peace, the final fruit of the Spirit is Joy.

—Aldous Huxley

INVINCIBLE MAN

by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

Our intellectual achievements are great and our technological advance has been outstanding, yet we live on the brink of fear, at the edge of a precipice and in perpetual fear of falling over it. We constantly speak of the inward presence of the divine in the human being, and all religions are an invitation to human beings to grow and change their nature; though our fineness may be limited, we are capable of intimate and unlimited develop- be what it happens to be at the present moment. ments. They tell us that human nature need not There is a capacity for self-renewal in the human being. This assertion of the spirit in man is the hope of the world for the future. Have we not rid ourselves of many pestilences which devastated humanity, of cannibalism and head-hunting? There was a time when we thought that God would be pleased if we sacrificed children to the altar. We thought religion would progress and expand by massacres and inquisitions. We have grown out of all those ideas; so also, the idea that war is essential is something that we can outgrow. There is no doubt that if human nature asserts itself, that if the spirit in man is given scope, this greatest pestilence of all ages will also be driven out by human conquest.

Man is invincible if his spirit asserts itself. He has endurance and capacity for compassion. He can stand up and say, "I will not bow down to circumstances; I am more powerful than the material forces which confront us." Man is higher

than the forces which overwhelm him. If this principle of the inward presence of the spirit is taken by us as an assertion of human dignity, we will realize the inter-wovenness of human life. If one man suffers, the whole of humanity suffers, for all humanity has become one today. It is that concept to which we must make a great contribution. We are passing through trying times, our civilization is being tested; it may be destroyed or renewed. What will happen to it depends on ourselves, not on our stars, nor upon the impersonal forces which surround us. It depends on the spirit of man, on the will of man to take these things seriously.

My being is love, for my being is light. My thoughts go forth to pierce the heavens, but turn back to woo the love of my heart. The ocean waves lash against the shores to raise the foam of love. My love I find everywhere. My love has become this, that and all. Love alone is real. If love is not, all else is useless. Talk of knowledge is arid waste — a vast desert — which love alone can turn to cool ambrosial garden, teeming with the charms of creation. My heart is love. My life is love; and the world is my love's image.

Why run from love when love is the sole sustenance; and why be caught in the net of fruitless quest? Seek love; find love and be happy. Love the Supreme! Love the Sublime! Love is the only Truth, the only Reality. Love is God and God is love.

—Swami Ramdas

MAN'S ENDLESS BEING

by Sister Daya

One often wonders at the indifferent attitude of people toward the fact of human existence. How can we live complacently in the midst of so much mystery, in the midst of a world whose hidden powers cause it to move in such splendid rhythm, and to function so unerringly? Scientists continually seek to understand and explain but are lead only to more mystery and to the discovery of ever deeper and greater laws. This wonderful, inscrutable world is our native atmosphere. We wake up every morning to greet it; we live with it throughout the day, and at night it still holds us in its arms. Yet for the most part we live a commonplace life. Our thoughts and feelings partake of the ordinary; we are bored; we are restless; we are unhappy. We cling to the little passing moment as if it were filled with precious things instead of being filled with thoughts that are worth very little.

Most of us have gone outward and have lived so intimately with the outer world. It is our plane of consciousness, and therefore our sense of reality is concentrated on the material where we have our existence at the present time. We have not yet learned to partake of the more intangible and ethereal, for we still have a physical body and its needs are always immediate. We do not contemplate the mystery of life any more than we are forced to. We take it very much as a matter of fact, as if there is nothing at all remarkable about it, that all we have to do is go down town to buy

new clothes or keep an appointment at the office or wash a few dishes. This is all very well, for these things are a part of life too; but we fail to connect them in any way to that mystery that causes the tides to sweep and the stars to move and even the tiniest creature to follow its own pattern of life and existence. Things are hidden from us for the most part and perhaps would be hidden forever from the rank and file of people were it not for the fact of death.

The question of death has been one of the central points in almost all religious beliefs because it is so vital to man. The awareness that we cannot go on forever in our little span here on earth; that death steps in and cuts short our laughter, our tears, our frivolities, our stupidities; that this tragic thing breaks up our homes, tears away those whom we love and carries them to a never-never land where we cannot hear their voices or touch their hands, is all very baffling. It has always been a challenge to man although he usually will not even think much about it.

More often than not death is looked upon as the greatest tragedy of life, a terrible thing that confronts us all — the end of everything. And yet this death, that seems so final, so dark and dreadful to us, is most blessed because here and now we must face our own mystery. No longer can we evade the issue; no longer can we cover with a veil of triviality that reality of life itself. As we stand before the dead even the most callous, the most cynical among us is silent. And this, I believe, is our saving grace. We ask ourself then as we never

did before, "What does it all mean? Who am I? Whence did I come? Whither am I going? Why all the strange tragedies, the lost opportunities, the frustration, for a few short years?"

Some seem to be given every chance, some seem to be given none; some are condemned by the whole world and seemingly they are not responsible for the forces that have played upon them, while others are pursued by good fortune from the very start. There is an innate sense of justice that rises up in the heart of man and says, "This cannot be." We are jolted out of our complacency and begin to think. A sense of wonder is born in us, and we commence to perceive and contemplate a great inner world of consciousness that has escaped our notice before. We look up into the starry sky at night with a longing to penetrate its secret, or stoop to pick up a little dust in the palm of our hand and wonder at it. Thus develops a deep, insatible desire to solve the riddle.

Observing great ones like the Christ or the Buddha or St. Francis of Assisi gives us hope. From what source have they drawn; how did they come into this life equipped with such wonderful vision and intense yearning for Truth that they broke through all obstacles? Could a humanity that produces these great beings have no meaning and be devoid of any background that we could call divine? These souls must draw their inspiration from some central Intelligence, the same force that so delicately balances worlds and atoms with such precision. Is it possible that this great Power could bring forth what seems to us injustice?

Oh yes, we know there is a law of action and reaction because we see it physically. If we knock our hand against a stone wall the hand becomes bruised; if we jump into the water and are unable to swim we sink and drown. We see these things and accept them. It is only when we come to the inner being of man that our acceptance is limited because we cannot see the whole picture and because these untoward happenings cannot be explained to us in a moment. So we pass it by and will have none of it. We even blind ourselves to the true meaning of teachings which we profess to believe.

The Bible has told us, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." And away back in the Laws of Manu we find the statement, that as we plant a seed so will it grow. In this we have what the Hindus call the great law of Karma, the law of action and reaction which applies to all planes of life — not only to the physical, but to the mental, emotional and spiritual as well. Man himself metes out his reward. We come into the world not like something newly created but as a pilgrim who has stopped at many inns. In each life we make a fresh start, have fresh opportunities; and although our outer mind forgets, within our consciousness is stored all the memories of past experiences to be blended, and reconciled, and transmuted into spiritual power. Then when at last we come face to face with the immensity of the mystery and secret that is enfolded in this material world, we realize that we could seek outwardly forever and

not come to the final point that would explain it all, and would never come to know "That by knowing which everything else becomes known."

Eventually we realize that it is only by going inward that we are able to penetrate the borderland of a new world, a new existence which lies within man's own self, and that it is in this where man finds safety; that peace is to be attained only in the realization of man's true and divine being, and that that being is something that does not die and is not born.

There are few, of course, a very few in this life who can break through all the obstructions of ignorance and darkness and self-limitation and touch the pulsing heart of existence. Perhaps one in millions of millions achieves this. But we are able to develop an awareness of things, we can turn our attention away just a little from the outer swirl and feel the rhythm and the power that lie deep, deep within. We can open ourselves and invoke God, invoke Truth, call on It with our whole soul. There are those who have done it and have become imbued with the sense of their own endlessness.

Ralph Waldo Emerson has said that it is only the unawakened soul who talks in terms of here and hereafter, that the greatly illumined ones speak of the here and now which is eternal. Human beings can find this within their own souls, a sort of endless sense of being; it is only the mind that tricks us. The great instincts of the human heart are there, but always we begin to doubt. "Why should we believe this; perhaps we are fool-

ing ourselves?" But maybe we are fooling ourselves if we believe the other way. And this could well be a worse fooling. Would it not be better to have the feeling that there is no limit to the life within us? Suppose we entertain that thought instead. By having a faith in this belief our conviction will carry us into a whole new experience. We begin to become aware of the loveliness of life, of a new sense of exaltation, and finally will come the living Reality itself catching us up into eternal glory. But this takes time; we may have to pass through many lives. However, once we awaken to this idea of the great pilgrimage a new meaning, a new rationale, a new sense of the dignity of man comes into existence. Life can no longer be the trivial, dull, ordinary thing that it has been. We become aware of the mystery of life — mystery from the moment we get up in the morning until we go to bed at night — mystery in the food we eat, in the people we contact, in the flowers and trees and all living things, in stars, in light, in water and in air. We are born again. Everything is redolent of beauty, everything is vibrant with an interest and an excitement and a thrilling intensity that it never had for us before. We are pilgrims. We are on the great march. We are in the care of the great eternal One who will never let us go, will never abandon us no matter what dark valleys we may have to go through.

Finally that time arrives when we gain the breadth of vision, the wonderful survey of life that comes with illumination. Then too will awaken in us the memory of past relationships and past lives

and we will see why it all had to be, and how it worked out in the beautiful rhythm of nature and of God. We find that great enormous mystery of life, that life of which I am a part and you are a part, life that is ordered and wonderful and beautiful and terrible and yet so simple that when the great vision comes we shall probably wonder why we were baffled, why we ever had fear or doubt, why we did not just walk forward with faith, knowing that the very ground we walked on was God.

MY FATHER'S HOUSE

by Ethelwing Webster

In this beginningless and endless playground of cosmic space the human race finds itself living on a tiny red mud sphere named Earth. Spinning through celestial space with other planets, the great and small solar systems of the universe appear to have two common attributes: a motion and a divine guiding intelligence that sets the tempo and rhythm of these sparkling mansions in the heavens.

The mystery of space has long been a challenge to man's imagination and the perceptions of some modern scientists who have scoffed at the metaphysical and occult teachings of the ancient mystics and alchemists have only led to theories based purely on the phenomena of physical substance on this physical plane of consciousness.

This evolutionary cycle of the twentieth century is taking us willy-nilly into a new and fascinating dimension of time and space, and perfectly normal

people are developing a peculiar power of clairvoyance, the ability to see on other and more etheric fields of matter. One does not have to be a lunatic, a liar or a mental case to see forms and objects quite different from those on this plane of material human consciousness.

The ancient seers and mystics taught that "Nature abhors a vacuum, and that there is no point in space that is not inhabited by beings."

The Creator and Father of these vast networks of planets, stars and solar systems decorating the picture gallery of cosmic space surely would not have left them uninhabited, and it is not too fantastic to think that people here on earth may be able to communicate through the medium of thought forms projected on the screen of cosmic space to other and more highly evolved beings.

The destiny of humanity is attained not by means of the atomic bombs, unholy conquests, and bloody wars which have turned the soil of our earth to a red color of savagery, but by the study and practice of the laws of the mysterious universe in which we live and move and have our being and in which we are playing a most important part.

Our own individual body temple is a sacred altar and blessed is he who knows this truth, for he will rediscover the secrets of the universe. That we may not stumble over the black shadows of materialism the path is lighted with illuminated sign posts left by the masters of wisdom, and the journey of the soul through the maze of many mansions could be a wonderful and thrilling adventure if we only knew our business.

THE DOCTRINE OF MAYA

by Swami Parampanthi

The doctrine of *maya* has been the peculiar gift of Indian thought and philosophy to the wisdom of the world. It has dominated India's religion and art, civilization and culture down through the ages. In fact, the whole basic trend of Hindu thinking has been colored and influenced by this belief. The concept apparently is a difficult one, but those who have the right spirit, the desire to know, should be well able to gain a complete picture of the whole doctrine.

It is in one sense, a philosophical conception; in another sense it is a forceful doctrine that has to do with life as a whole, with the day-to-day existence of human beings. This maya concept has been a guiding force in India through several milleniums; it has supplied the vitality of the nation because the people have adhered to it through all upheavals, and they have always been victorious simply because they have put the concept into practice in the daily affairs of life.

If maya is a difficult doctrine, then naturally the explanation would be difficult. There are two factors in the process of any exposition: expression of obscurity and obscurity of expression. Many times those who attempt to explain a subject are hard to understand because of their inability to choose proper words and phrases to expound the subject concerned. These people are suffering from obscurity of expression. But there is another obscurity stemming from the ambiguity of the

subject itself which makes it difficult for the exponent to express his thoughts clearly. So, I would like to convey the spirit of the doctrine rather than the letter, the picture of the whole trend rather than the anatomy of the concept.

The word maya comes from the root *ma* which means to grow, to understand, to assimilate, to mold, to measure. All these ideas are involved in this one word. But maya has undergone various changes since it was first conceived by our ancient seers. Going back to the early Vedic age we find it meaning magic: maya was considered to be the magical power of the God in heaven, Indra, who could create illusion, change forms and perform various other extraordinary feats. Thus, in the old days people came to connect maya with the performance of magic and miracle. Then in the Upanishadic age the philosophical meaning of maya began to grow and crystalize. The gradual evolution of the word reached its culmination, perhaps, in the writings of Sri Sankaracharya in the 7th century A.D. It would be very interesting to note here how this doctrine gradually took definite form and matured.

The ancient philosophers began to observe the multiformity of the universe; they had become aware of the existence of polarity, time, space and causation. Then they perceived the existence of something beyond the universe, something beyond the planes of manifestation and thus found the two functioning side by side in nature and in man. And these two forces puzzled them for a while. On the one hand, they recognized the absolute nature of the Divine, the essence of Being, tran-

quil, non-dual, eternal, invincible, unchanging. On the other hand, they discovered a force of dynamic changes, the ephemeral flow of creation which was multiform, diverse, living, dying, rising and falling. They wanted to reconcile the two conflicting elements which they saw: existence in the domain of time and space and existence beyond time and space. How could they bring into harmony the idea of one God and the existence of the many, the concept of eternal, changeless Being and the dynamics of change and movement? Their reflection eventually brought them to the conclusion that ultimately Reality was One, beyond name and form, beyond the categories of change.

But, then, how could they account for and explain creation? The understanding was finally reached that the same Reality must have two basic aspects: one, the non-cosmic, non-creative and the other, the creative and cosmic. The cosmic phase required force and energy; for no manifestation could be possible without the dynamism of some power expressing itself through the radiant forms of nature and through endless multiformity. That power, they concluded must come directly from the Absolute, the Godhead, and they termed that power maya — the maya that is inseparably connected with the Divine although expressing itself through many forms. In other words, the creative aspect of Godhead is maya.

The question was asked, "How can maya, which is energy in form, which expresses itself in dynamism, reside in Godhead without disturbing Godhead?" Again, they concluded that energy itself

has two aspects, the static and the dynamic. In its static phase it exists in the being of God; it rests in the primordial substratum, which is considered to be Absolute. In that sense it is inseparable from the Absolute or God because the energy is in a dormant state and is not expressing itself through the dynamism of change. This aspect is called "maya the pure" because it is not polluted by manifestation. It can be likened to the subtle electronic force residing in almost indistinguishable form in the heart of God as the whiteness of milk is inseparable from the milk itself.

But God wanted to create, to project this universe. In the Upanishads we find the verse: "I am One, I want to be many." There was a stir in the cosmic bosom; the energy which had been resting as an inseparable unit in the bosom of God was up and doing, and creation began to manifest itself. The latent energy or maya was now roused into action and forms began to appear in the formless substratum.

Therefore, from the metaphysical standpoint, maya is the creative energy of God, His medium and material of creation; and from the physical standpoint it is the primordial energy, the fountain of all things that we find in the universe. That is why, in the Indian concept of evolution, maya plays such a vital role, because everything that exists in time and space can be reduced back to the one primordial substance, maya. Now science too has come to the same conclusion: that whatever exists is nothing but the dance of electronic movement, that everything in this universe can

be traced to the one single entity, the primary source of energy which is one and the same as that which the Hindus call maya.

This, in short, is but the metaphysical and physical concept of maya manifesting itself through energy and form. We know that energy must express itself; it cannot be static forever. Thus energy, which is the source-material of creation manifests itself for a while and then dissolves into unmanifest, causal form, only after a pause to continue this play of creation *ad infinitum*. So the maya doctrine visualizes the entire creation as a cyclic process: the projection of eternal energy expressing itself in different forms in cosmic matter, in solar systems, in trees, in flowers — in everything. But after a while this energy is bound to become disorganized and disintegrated and returns to the primordial bosom from whence it came.

Today there is indisputable proof of this from modern physical science which has made the discovery that our particular universe is a temporary affair. It cannot be perpetualized, it cannot be eternalized, it cannot be immortal. Disintegration must eventually take place and this universe in time and space will come to an end. That it may take billions of years does not matter. The fact is that it must one day cease to be. The process of the inevitable and gradual disorganization of centralized energy is called, in science, "entrophy." Thus in this discovery we find the confirmation of the Vedantic concept of cyclic creation and dissolution as expressed through maya.

Now, our next question is: How far is the human being, as an individual, subject to the force of maya? Let us observe the drama of the universe and mankind as well. Wherever we look we see the results of cyclic changes. In world affairs we find the rise and fall of empires, the ascendence and decline of civilizations, the victory and defeat of human beings. Man reaches a state of perfection through birth and growth and then disappears. There is a perennial process manifesting itself through the whole of creation, and as we observe we become aware of certain basic laws functioning through it all. Everything is subject to change; everything is ruled by birth and death; everything must one day pass away from this earth. Nothing here is one eternal show. We also know that the same laws operate unmistakably among human beings. Objectives and ideas, thoughts and attitudes of diverse individuals differ from day to day; they are being constantly modified, altered and transformed by the forces that are inherent in man himself. Even those who are wise, and conscious of the forces at work cannot escape them, and follow the same pattern. For example, we love things although we know that they are not everlasting. We enjoy a flower knowing fully well that the flower is to die tomorrow. We have love, we have affection, aware that these too must go one day, and that we must die. But we do not seem to care; and we keep trying to involve ourselves in the flow of the universe. We charm ourselves with beautiful things; we are constant participants in the color-

ful, evanescent drama of life which is eternal and has been going on since the beginning of creation. This is not a pessimistic picture, however, not a dark way of looking at things; it is rather, a reflection of reality, a photographic image of what goes on in the factual universe of being and becoming. The whole trend presents maya in action.

There is another aspect of that same force: the aspect of duality. We are, as human beings, subject to certain invincible laws and are thus forced to put on the glasses of duality. We think in terms of light and darkness, subject and object, love and hate, and we do not seem to be able to go beyond. This pattern is persistent; it haunts us; it has chased at the heels of humanity since the dawn of creation and we seem to be bound to a life of illusion.

Must human beings be the eternal slaves of the law of maya? Is there no way out of this prison? Is man a tiny, helpless creature, tossed to and fro in the tempestuous sea of life? Long, long ago a cry went forth from the hearts of human beings. Again came the answer from our Hindu philosophers — a light in the midst of darkness. If we could but catch hold of the Reality itself, if we could but take a peep into the real picture, we would go beyond maya. For, after all, maya is the manifestation of Godhead in only a tiny fractional form. That small fraction and its area of influence can be superseded by spiritual intuition, and illumination, because God, according to Hinduism, is the Lord of maya. In that sense maya is directly under the control of absolute Godhead.

And as we have a soul that is basically identical with the Absolute, we too have the power to go beyond maya by means of our own higher aspiration, by defying the laws of nature and by transcending the barriers of time, space and causation.

The mystics and saints of ancient civilizations and even those of today have transcended the duality of attraction and repulsion, love and hate, rise and fall. They have come to a point where they have touched the fringe of immortality, the domain of Reality, that has nothing to do with the process of maya. Here is a world beyond birth and death, changes and cycles. The moment we step into this plane we are free, we are no longer perturbed by duality and by the phenomenal forces that drag us down. We view the universe as a temporary play in the whole scheme of things.

Each one of us at a certain point will have to rise above the evolutionary process of manifestation in time and space. And how are we to do it? This brings us to the concept of renunciation, of disassociating ourselves from the ephemeral and associating ourselves only with that which is eternal. We find this expression of the permanent and illusory beatifully depicted in Hindu art through all the pictures, paintings and images of gods and goddesses. There is a flowing quality usually represented by a veil, which indicates the evanescent against the background of something solid and permanent and changeless. Everything, according to Hindu philosophy, is visualized against that which is unchanging and perennial. Even the human personality in its various phases

is seen as something that is eternal. Mind, intellect, understanding, all are functioning, but we must go beyond their domain to touch eternity. As soon as we do this all that is transitory disappears like a mirage, and the phantasmagoria which is this universe ceases to be. It does not mean, however, that the world is an illusion although many people believe this to be the meaning of maya. The assumption is absolutely incorrect. Indian philosophers accept even the reality of a dream, because the dream produces tangible results like fear, anguish or a cry even though we know dreams to be but passing. Thus, according to the philosophers the universe has a reality — a relative reality — and the experience of it as such can only be negated when a mystic has the overwhelming realization of the omnipresence of Godhead.

Thus, the doctrine of maya maintains that there are grades of reality, such as dream-reality, phenomenal-reality and abosolute-reality, which function at different levels of consciousness. When we are dreaming we think that state to be real; when we are in an awakened state, actually that too is a long dream which we think to be real. The world is real only so long as the feeling of reality is not superseded by the feeling that all is God. But some day this dream will break and we will touch superconsciousness, our eternal Source, our one Goal. Then will the Divine Essence permeate through and establish us inseparably in Godhead. Then everything will become one perennial flow of bliss, peace and understanding.

We must come to behold everything in the

universe as the expression of the One. The moment we do this our world of isolation dissolves and we realize that we are no longer helpless creatures but significant parts of the cosmic Whole. Therefore the whole objective of the doctrine of maya is to lead us out of maya into the greater, freer, divine realm which is the birthright of all mankind.

AN HASIDIC TALE

On a certain New Year's night, the Maggid of Zlochov saw a man who had been a reader in his city, and who had died a short time ago. "What are you doing here?" he asked.

"The rabbi knows," said the dead man, "that in this night, souls are incarnated anew. I am such a soul."

"And why were you sent out again?" asked the maggid.

"I led an impeccable life here on earth," the dead man told him.

"And yet you are forced to live once more?" the maggid went on to ask.

"Before my death," said the man, "I thought over everything I had done and found that I had always acted in just the right way. Because of this, my heart swelled with satisfaction and in the midst of this feeling I died. So now they have sent me back into the world to atone for my pride."

At that time a son was born to the maggid. His name was Rabbi Wolf. He was very humble.

The spiritual life is eternal life or nothing.

—George Tyrrell

ERIC AXEL HERMELIN

TRANSLATOR OF THE MYSTICS

by Astrid Setterwall Angstrom

About high things one must write with a tremor. Everyday language is not enough. One has to delve deeply into the inner chambers of language to find the real and true expressions.

—ERIC HERMELIN

In the year 1802, a boy was born to poor parents in a small cottage deep in a forest of Sweden. The Holy Bible was read every day in that cottage and for the boy the biblical world became more real than his own surroundings.

In 1812 there was a severe famine; the frost had come early and taken the crops, and bark had to be mixed into the bread. The want intensified the religious life of the forest dwellers. The boy felt that the commandments of Jesus to his disciples were directed to him personally. The Word was everything to him and he thought of himself as having received a first-hand calling to preach the words of the Savior to other peoples. In order to train himself he would stand on a large stone in the forest, talking to the animals he was herding. With great hardship he managed to go to school and university. In the history of protestant mission his name, Peter Fjellstedt, came to be well known. And he is considered to have lived his life in the spirit of the apostles.

Fjellstedt was a genius. He set himself to learn languages that would be useful for his future work. He knew how to speak Icelandic, German,

French, English, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Spanish, Arabic, Persian, Tamil, Sanskrit and several other Oriental languages. He married a girl from southern Germany who was well-educated and a fine musician. With her he went to India and settled down in the south, in Paloncottah, where he trained natives to become teachers. Judging from a letter in his own hand, the strange, foreign country seemed to have impressed him differently from what he had expected. He wrote, "The world of the heathens appears quite different when one is there than what one imagined before. One becomes filled with humility. . . "

A daughter, Eugenia, was born in Paloncottah. She was suckled by an Indian wet nurse. How the family by and by found their way back to Sweden is outside the frame of this article; but Eugenia, who had been nourished by an Indian mother's milk, eventually married the Swedish nobleman, Baron Axel Hermelin, owner of several estates in the rich province of Ostergotland. It is said that the marriage was not a smooth one. The young wife filled the old mansion with music. Their numerous children were raised by foreign nurses and governesses and learned French and English before they learned their native tongue.

Thus, this ancestry of Eric Axel Hermelin strongly marked his personality. Being born among the well-to-do landowning aristrocracy, he did not have to suffer starvation or any such hardship. He was born also with a "tender skin," oversensitive and defenseless. He was his parents' unfortunate child and at the same time the most

beloved. He studied Oriental languages at the University of Uppsala, but never sat for the examinations. Academic studies were not for him. He was too much a bohemian. To brace himself he began to drink freely as did most of his companions. His father and brothers brought him back from Uppsala and the father gave him the opportunity to take care of one of his smaller estates. But to work under his father was more than he could endure. The father, not knowing how to deal with the son, ridiculed and treated him with sarcasm. Eric, with his long awkward arms and legs that moved so clumsily, always hitting against something, and with his retiring, shy behavior, seemed impossible to his father. The mother had never become adjusted to her marriage. She remained a stranger in the world. So the son must have inherited that strangeness from his mother.

Eric Hermelin left home and began to travel. He became a real vagabond. He tried many professions. For a time he was a teacher in a school for girls in America. Another time he worked with the Norwegian consul in Australia. But he did not do well. He did not do well anywhere. Once he became a soldier in the English army in India. Again he was given a chance to move upwards in stable work. He took two examinations in Hindustani, but he failed and thus disgraced himself.

While he was in the soldiers' camp in India he met his spiritual teacher. He never talked much about him. None of his friends knew whether he was a man of real wisdom or merely a teacher of

languages. Through him, Hermelin took up his studies of old Persian again. Gradually he came in touch with the old Sufi masters of the 11th and 12th centuries.

The Sufis were a sect of mystics within Islam, influenced by Christian saints. Sufism flourished largely in Persia where it met with Buddhistic and Vedantic ideas. Rumi, Sadi, Hafiz, Attar and other mystics made Sufism known to the West. The many aspects of nature inspired them to compose the most artistic and subtle literary expressions. For instance: "When the Soul roused by Beauty is awake, it dances and with each movement it creates a picture, a poem, a song."

There is legend that wine had its origin in Persia. The Sufis in their symbology saw the world as a tavern. God is the one who pours the wine. The human heart is the cup. The wine is the spiritual life-flow. They used such terms as the rose garden — which means the inner shrine of the heart — the wine-press, the Beloved, etc. They sang about the Beloved as if He were their earthly lover because they had no better words. There are many kinds of wine. The drinker becomes drunk. He may be intoxicated by the wine of love, harmony and beauty and in ecstasy reach the Highest, or he may be drunk with other kinds of wine. The one who rises above the influence of wine and attains complete soberness becomes the controller of all wine. This state Rumi describes: "The flame of everlasting love does burn ere it transforms, utterly consuming the ego before it quickens the lover with the embrace of union."

Eric Hermelin did not tell the story of his life in an orderly manner, with dates and places. His way of relating was to give colorful glimpses, to give lively descriptions with many long parentheses that never prevented him from finding the real trend again. Only the listener had to bide his time and not be in haste. Time was completely forgotten when one visited with him.

Through hard experience he had learned the secret of humility. He used to make fun of himself and tell how vain he had been in his youth, how he had even been proud of his title until he discovered that the word *baro-baronis* means wooden-head. Then he laughed at it. Life had taken away all vanity, all feeling of I and mine. He had nothing left, no position, no prestige. "Some of us have to be dragged through filth," he would say, "fall in the lowest state to find out that ego is worth nothing. Then, and only then, one becomes so empty as to be able to receive the vital life of the Sufi mystics and be filled with the love about which they sing." With them Eric Hermelin, this wandering seeker, found his real companionship; in their company he remained for the rest of his life. His grandfather had felt urged to preach the Chirstian belief, conceived in the stern forest of the North, to the Eastern peoples. The grandson made it his message to bring back the wisdom of the East to the country where he was born.

Eric Hermelin realized that the world was not a place for him; he felt lost in it. Therefore, when he knew that his long travelling days were over

(he had spent nine years in Persia) he took refuge in the mental hospital of St. Lars, outside the University twon of Lund in southern Sweden. There he spent the remainder of his life, translating into Swedish the writings of the Sufi saints and poets, as well as those of Jacob Boehme and other mystics. What impelled him to select St. Lars as his adobe no one knows. Had he lived in the Orient he would probably have gone into a secluded mountain cave or a monastery were he could have practiced renunciation and lived a life of inward discipline. St. Lars gave him this opportunity. As he lived his consecrated life in inner joy, less and less despondency cast its spell over him. more and more, he came to interpret the wisodm of the Sufis and manifest it in his own life. At St. Lars he received the support he needed. He considered it a privilege to be there and he liked his way of life. The doctor became his intimate friend; the nurses were interested in his work and encouraged him. "It is better," he used to say, "to be inside than outside the walls. Here I can write and express what I want. If I had lived outside I might have been sued and *put* inside." He did speak out from within the walls. Wherever he found stupidity and cruelty his sharp pen lashed without mercy as in his little booklet, *Factum et Causa.*

Eric Hermelin was already an old man when I was brought to him the first time in 1931. Entering the vast park, I felt that I had come to a place of shadows. Although he lived in a private part of the mental hospital where he occupied two rooms, many locked doors had to be unlocked and

locked again behind me. I had to pass through wards where patients stared with gross curiosity or did not observe at all or smiled blank expressionless smiles. It was a strange, significant contrast when at last I met this man from whom emanated such warm friendliness that I felt perfectly at ease. I was seeing a man who apparently had drunk deep from the source of inner joy. He was tall and broadchested with a healthy, ruddy face and grey hair and with some missing teeth. One could not forget his luminous eyes once he had seen them. They seemed to look right into a person's inner being. They sparkled with fun when he related anecdotes about his relatives who were both peculiar and original. His presence made one forget the surroundings. He rang for tea, and he talked to the nurses as if they were housemaids on his own estate. Then he brought forth a book that he had just published. It was the first volume of Jalalu'd Din Rumi's *Mesnavi.* He began to read to us. I was impressed by the ancient, majestic form of the Swedish language of his translation. It struck me then that he must have selected every word, weighed and measured it before he found it right for use. As he read on, now and then he looked at us as if his eyes were asking, "Are you really interested or are you merely listening out of politeness?" This was a challenge I had to meet so I answered him that I was glad this was being done for I had always wanted to read the *Mesnavi* and study it. He stood up, went to his bookshelf and with a magnificent sweeping gesture, as if he offered us a treasure,

took out volume after volume: "Take this, and this, and this! And when you go from here, go to the bookstore in Lund and tell them from me that you have *carte blanche* to take any of my works you want." His dark eyes radiated light. Overwhelmed I tried to thank him, searching for words, "This is a kingly gift." "What is kingly," he answered, "is that you asked for it. I am like a cook," he continued, "who places his dishes before you; the more you eat, the happier I am." This was the beginning of a long friendship.

Eric Hermelin was the first to translate into a Western language, *The Memory of Friends (Tazkiratu'l Awliya)* by Faridu'd Din Attar — Attar meaning "The Maker of Spices." He writes here about the lives of Persian saints. Among them is the woman Rabi'ah from Basra. A conversation once took place between this woman and some holy men on the subject of sincerity. One said, "He is not sincere who does not patiently endure the blows of his Lord." Rabi'ah answered, "That saying smells of egotism." Another said, "He is not sincere who does not enjoy the blows of his Lord." Rabi'ah rejoined, "I know a better saying than that. He is not sincere who does not forget the pain of the blows in his joy at beholding the face of his Lord." Once Rabi'ah fell ill and when asked the cause of her sickness, answered, "I dwelt upon the joys of Paradise, and therefore my Beloved has chastized me." She added a prayer: "Consume with fire, O Lord, the heart that loveth Thee." She made a pilgrimage to the Ka'ba and she is reported to have said, "I see only bricks and a

house of stone. What do they profit me? It is Thou that I want." These words show how indifferent the Sufis were to outer forms.

The translator, Hermelin, also completed *Shah-Namah,* the *Book of Kings.* This is a chronicle written by the poet Firdausi in the year 1000 A.D. in which he tells the history of Persia. Hermelin said that if *Shah-Namah* were to be more generally known it would compete with Homer in the richness of imagination, and that languages which for centuries have taken their metraphors from the Greek world would be enriched with new poetic expressions. *Kalilah* is another work of Attar rendered in Swedish by our friend. It is a collection of fables in which animals express the highest wisdom. There were two big volumes of *Persian Poetry* — an anthology of *rubaiat* which means poems in four lines. All this was put before us in that first visit.

How many times I saw Eric Hermelin I do not recall. Each visit was a festival. Sometimes he met me in the park and we walked under the trees. He always wanted to know how I had travelled to Lund. He was also particular that a repast should be served. When he felt especially elated he would call a sister, with all the might of his voice, "Dearly beloved little sister, go down into my wine cellar and bring up a bottle of sparkling burgundy and lay the table with the best silver for my visitor today." The sister would take her part in the play with a, "Yes, Baron" and a curtsy, and came back with a soft drink and set the table with the ordinary cutlery of St. Lars. And it would be the gayest meal because the host would let his wit flow

and, serving the dishes himself, imitate English, French and German waiters and act like a first-rate comic. Then he would pour the drink, singing a ballad in a fine baritone voice. Such were his good days! Imagine! that one could laugh so heartily in the mental hospital of St. Lars! No doubt in the morning he would find a word, a good, adequate, long sought word for his translation.

There were other days, when the words did not come to him. He was then in great suspense, walking backward and forward, brooding over his own unworthiness, in deep despair. The sisters encouraged him. Some of them read his books as much as their time permitted. They had become his real friends and were learning from him. Little notes would be placed on his writing table or beside his bed where he was sure to find them: "You will find the right word today!" The *word!* O! The *word!* When at last it came, his anguish was forgotten and he was jubilant and ever grateful that this great work was given to him.

To render the overflowing, rich Persian language into Swedish which is so much more poor, requires great knowledge and love. He had both. He used to wander under the big trees "sounding" — first in Persian, then in Swedish. His treatment of his native language was extraordinary. He loathed to see it made vulgar and tame and the real meaning of the words lost, as is happening today. His profound search for old, original, expressive words has made his translations monumental and in their own way quite unique.

The old Swedish saying, "Tell me with whom

you associate, and I will tell you who you are," is applicable to Eric Hermelin. There were few only who found their way to St. Lars — some relatives, some friends, now and then a journalist. Mostly he was alone, alone with the mystics — alone to drink from the clear source of their wisdom. As he lived with their words, he became one of them. With Rumi he would say one must be like a parrot, repeating only the name of God. One must empty the heart so that it can be filled with the spiritual wine. With all his knowledge he was the humblest of men. "Why, *I* am blind! *I* cannot see . . . in fact *I am* not! *I* do not *exist! God* is. No one else. . . "

Eric Hermelin was honest. He did not compromise. He used to point out that to really rely on God is to rely on Him in everybody, to rely on goodness. Self-defense is most selfish. Either you do rely on God or you do not; there is no state between.

In his honesty he considered the *word* sacred. A translator must not tamper with words. He was bold enough not to attempt easy translations. Neither the involved German of Jacob Boehme, whose words were some of the first he rendered in Swedish, nor the flowery language of the Persian poets seems to have lost any of its own character. To translate was to him the same as to interpret. Through careful study of his many footnotes one can follow the honest striving of the translator and see how his work was performed with "awe and reverence." It was his prayer, his devotion, his meditation that he might render the rhythm, the music, the grand beauty

of the language of the mystics. The word is holy. It must never be polluted, stained or soiled.

Eric Hermelin was hardly appreciated in his lifetime. Being a self-taught man, he was ignored by the critics. No publisher was willing to take his translations so he had to publish his own works. In a footnote he writes, "I am well. But there is a secret in this. One cannot begin to thrive before one has lost all feeling of dignity, and of one's own pride as well as that of others." That was the secret of the joy he had at last won.

It is significant that this self-effacing man hardly wrote anything of his own except these footnotes. They are sharp, witty and sarcastic. He lashes with the whip of words those who translate the Holy Bible into everyday language; he criticizes theologians, and he meets them in their own field, himself having mastered Hebrew and Greek. Words had for him tremendous power. To misuse them was fatal. He quoted Doctor Samuel Johnson, England's first lexicographer, "Sir, the man who would defile his own language is quite capable of stabbing his grandmother and of defiling his father's tomb."

In January 1936, Eric Hermelin wrote in a letter, "Have you received *Mesnavi III?* It is a continuation of books I and II, and yet independent and standing loftily alone . . . I'm on the last thousand of the last book (the sixth) of the *Mesnavi.* I have 985 verses more to translate before the whole book (25,632 verses) is complete."

The whole meaning of Rumi's *Mesnavi* is to be found in the prologue of the first book where he

sings of the longing of the soul to be united with the Beloved. The work begins with an introduction by the author (which is here given in English translation by E. H. Whinfield): "This is the book of *Mesnavi*. It contains the roots of the roots of the roots of the faith and treats of the mysteries of 'Union' and 'Certitude' . . . I have exerted myself to enlarge this book of poetry in rhymed couplets which contains strange and rare naratives, beautiful sayings and recondite indications, a path for the devout, and a garden for the pious — short in its expressions, but having numerous applications. . . " Rumi concludes with a prayer that it may prove "a blessing to those who are possessed of insight, the godly, the spiritual, the heavenly-minded, *the men of light who keep silence.*" (Here is a note in the margin by Eric Hermelin: "What is better than *wisdom?* If you desire the truth my brother, *silence.*")

In another letter the translator writes of the rhythm of language: "The genuine rhythmic form that has borne forth divine inspiration has unlimited variations . . . In Persia in the twelfth century the metre is so regulated and specialized that the Persians had to take their refuge in and use the most strange, the most astonishing ways to find room for and press in the many hundreds and thousands of different and varying metrical feet, bound by the most severe laws. In this way they classify: The head rubrics consist of a certain number of *oceans*. The under rubrics under these consist of a certain number of *ships*. Under each ship function so and so many *sails,* so and so many

masts, so and so many *anchors* and so on. . . These laws — inculcated with uncompromising, relentless exactitude — were observed and supervised at the same time as Europeans were swept into the darkness of the middle ages as a punishment for the violence of 'Christians' toward Musulmen and Jews during the Crusades when 'barbarism' was called 'chivalry'. . . Not the Persian language, however beautiful it is, has made me fastidious; no, in my ears constantly rings the sonorous sound of the holy Israelic prophets and message bearers, their majestic and unspeakably lovely tones. . . "

The happiest days Eric Hermelin experienced were those when with a translation ready, he himself walked into the publishing firm in Lund where the director was his personal friend; and when later on he read the proofs and delivered them to the printer; and lastly when he could have his books beautifully bound and send them to the friends and acquaintances who were interested. He was a fine and tactful man who never imposed himself upon anyone. In a gracious manner he contacted the patients in the same building. With a generous desire to let others partake of his knowledge, he taught foreign languages to the nurses. His heart was filled to the brim with divine love. He loved his relatives, dead and living, his nurses and his friends. He used to address all around him as his Beloved. He said, "You think I am just throwing around words of love in a lavish way! But in reality, you see, IT IS SO. Everyone is the Beloved." He had reached a state from which he saw nothing but the divine love in all beings and in all things.

Eric Hermelin was a pioneer. He had found a path to the wisdom of the Orient on which no one from his country had trod before. It was not an easy path. He was like a whirling leaf in the wind that had been thrown into depths, but which had danced upwards to the heights. His ambition, as well as his pride, was burned to ashes. There was no room in his heart for anything but love. "If you are a seeker for purity, be then satisfied with dirt. The mirror polisher has black hands." It was not until long after his death it slowly began to be understood what a gigantic task he accomplished.

When eighty years old he received some publicity and was interviewed. He rejoiced. It is no wonder that a writer is happy to know there are readers. Soon afterward he wrote a very characteristic letter: " . . . I cannot write *at all,* not *well,* not even *badly* unless I am whipped. And ever since I became eighty years old, I am sad to say, I have not tasted God's whip. And it serves me right. I let interviewers come in because I wanted to be praised. Now I stand as a donkey fixed in mud."

Among the last words I heard Eric Hermelin say before he died in 1944 were, "We do not seek the outer Reality, we do not even seek the inner Reality — but the inmost."

There is never any peace for those who resist God. —*Fenelon*

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ANANDA ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA

The momentum of interest created during Gayatri Devi's absence for the summer carried the work of the Ashrama forward. Swami Parampanthi, who conducted all of the public services with the exception of a few in October, received highly enthusiastic response. During his three week's absence Darrell Miya took charge and was given the same hearty support.

Durga Puja, one of India's outstanding religious festivals, was observed publicly on Sunday, October the eleventh. The Swami gave a masterful talk on "Worship of Mother in India."

Deepali, or the Festival of Lights, was celebrated on the evening of November first. It was a gala occasion, begun with the service in the temple — which was full to overflowing — and concluded at the community house where music and much gaiety prevailed.

Srimati Gayatri Devi returned early in November to resume her post in the west. Thanksgiving and Christmas were appropriately observed by their traditional religious services, and on December twenty-second, Holy Mother's birthday was commemorated by a day of worship and devotion to her. On one Sunday in December, America's walking Sannyasini, "Peace Pilgrim", was the Ashrama's guest, and she shared the platform with Gayatri Devi that morning.

The year 1960 was ushered in prayerfully with the New Year's Eve candlelight service which has been followed by continuous activity. The birth-

days of Swami Vivekananda and Swami Paramananda were observed on January twenty-fourth and February seventh, respectively. Each was the occasion for much festivity; after special public services of tribute in the temple, Hindu dinners were served to large groups at the community house.

On February tenth Gayatri Devi again left for the eastern center of the work. Traveling via Florida, she paused for four days in St. Petersburg as the guest of Rev. McBride Panton, pastor of the Church of Spiritual Philosophy — where she gave three public services.

On February twenty-eighth in honor of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday, Swami Parampanthi spoke on "Sri Ramakrishna and the Modern World" before a large congregation. In the afternoon an informal concert was given including voice, French horn and piano.

VEDANTA CENTRE, COHASSET AND BOSTON, MASS.

The new temple, Viswamandir, dedicated in Cohasset on October fourth was the setting for the four days of the worship of Divine Mother known as the Durga Puja. This feast culminated on October eleventh in the Sunday services and an Indian dinner which was served in the glowing out-of-doors to seventy-five guests. Many remained for the final worship in the late afternoon and received the peace-water in the last and most significant ceremony of the festival.

On November first, Sunday services were resumed at the Chapel in Boston. In the afternoon of that day a benefit concert of sacred music was given in Cohasset by Virginia and Harvey Ritten-

house and Mrs. Schankel. The ensemble consisted of voice, violin and piano and was most inspiring.

At eventide the temple assumed an exquisite loveliness with many vigil lights shining in its windows and upon the altar in observance of Deepali. There was a large congregation which, after the service, crowded into the house to enjoy fellowship and Hindu refreshments. Soon after this very full day Gayatri Devi flew again to the California retreat.

In December, the Vedanta Chapel in Boston moved from its Commonwealth Avenue address to new quarters at 687 Boylston Street. Here Srimati Snehalata Devi has faithfully conducted all the weekly services and classes, inspiring the group by her humble and dedicated spirit.

The sacred celebrations, both Christian and Indian, have been fittingly observed, and the traditional New Year's Eve watch service was held in Cohasset in the new temple.

For the birthday observance of Sri Ramakrishna the Boston Chapel was greatly overcrowded when Gayatri Devi conducted the Sunday morning service there. After the eleven o'clock worship, many friends and devotees drove to the Cohasset Ashrama to partake of the Hindu dinner and hear the afternoon service held in the Temple of the Universal Spirit. While the interior of the temple is still being finished services are held there regularly each Sunday and Tuesday evening.

Although this winter's record-breaking storm put over the Ashṛama a heavy cover of snow, it caused no damage, nor did it in any way interfere with the active program which constitutes the daily life of the Ashrama.